

Corning Building  
100 Pearl Street  
Hartford  
Hartford County  
Connecticut

HABS No. CT-396

HABS  
CONN  
2 - HARF  
13 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
CONN,  
2-HARF,  
13-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CORNING BUILDING

HABS No. CT-396

Location: 100 Pearl Street  
Hartford, Hartford County, Connecticut

USGS Hartford North Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 18.693190.4626240

Present Owner: 100 Pearl Street Associates  
c/o The Farley Company  
CityPlace  
Hartford, CT 06103

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: The Corning Building is an example of the Art Moderne, of which there are few examples in Hartford. The front elevation achieves its austere effect through the use of sophisticated proportions, planar relationships and fine materials. The central stairwell just inside the front door incorporates a stainless steel stair railing in what is perhaps the only commercial streamlined interior in the city. Lester B. Scheide, the architect, conducted what was probably the largest practice in the city in the 1930s.

PART I HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1934, 1935. Hartford Building Permit 2-C, September 15, 1934.
2. Architect: Lester B. Scheide (1897-1953) of Hartford. Scheide attended Yale and flew in the Lafayette Esquadriile before commencing the successful practice of architecture in Hartford. Large homes in eclectic styles for the West End of Hartford and West Hartford probably constituted the bulk of his practice. His out-of-the-ordinary commissions, in addition to the Corning Building, included the Spanish House in West Hartford (1928), listed in the National Register of Historic Places June 14, 1979, and the Dutch Point Colony and Charter Oak Terrace public housing projects. Scheide maintained his offices in the second floor of the Corning Building.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Clerk's Office of the City of Hartford, Connecticut. The property is parcel 1988 on City Engineer's May 421.

1854 Deed, May 22, 1854, recorded in Volume 89, page 533.

Henry K.W. Welch  
To  
John B. Corning

1930 Deed, January 30, 1930, recorded in Volume 654, page 254.  
Hartford-Connecticut Trust Co., trustee, John J. Corning Estate  
To  
Ninety-Four Pearl Street, Inc.

1931 Deed, January ?, 1931, recorded in Volume 673, page 581.  
Ninety-Four Pearl Street, Inc.  
To  
Hartford-Connecticut Trust Co., trustee, John J. Corning Estate

1948 Deed, April 1, 1944, recorded in Volume 829, page 228.  
Hartford-Connecticut Trust Co., trustee, John J. Corning Estate  
To  
Houghton Bulkeley, Graham Jones, Charles P. Cooley, Jr.

1967 Deed, September 6, 1967, recorded in Volume 1297, page 345  
Houghton Bulkeley Estate, one-third interest  
To  
Charles P. Cooley, Jr., and Graham Jones

1976 Deed, November 19, 1976, recorded in Volume 1546, page 245.  
Charles P. Cooley, Jr., Estate, one-half interest  
To  
Hartford National Bank & Trust Co. and Adelaide E. Cooley,  
trustees

1976 Deed, December 17, 1976, recorded in Volume 1549, page 244.  
Hartford National Bank & Trust Co. and Adelaide E. Cooley,  
trustees, one-half interest  
To  
100 Pearl Street Associates

1976 Deed, December 22, 1976, recorded in Volume 1549, page 247.  
Graham Jones, one-half interest  
To  
100 Pearl Street Associates

4. Builder: Allyn Wadhams.

5. Original plans: An incomplete set of original drawings is at the Connecticut Historical Society. They were drawn by W.W. (Willard Wilkens) and checked by I.L.R.B. (Irving La Rue Brown) of Scheide's office. Drawings are included for such details as the Corning name disc at the top of the front elevation, the star patterns for the sides of the vestibule, and a section of the streamlined stairway. Materials are indicated, including travertine, aluminite, vitrolite.

There are also drawings at the Connecticut Historical Society for a companion structure to be built on the adjoining vacant lot to the west, at the corner of Pearl and Trumbull Streets. It was to be similar to 100 Pearl Street in style and massing. There is no information on why this structure was planned and why the plans were not executed. The vacant lot was the site of the 19th Century Hartford Hall of Records.

6. Alterations: The exterior has remained relatively free from alterations. On the interior, the stairway to the west mezzanine has been opened up and many halls and partitions have been introduced to subdivide the spaces. On the second floor a portion of the central wall was removed.

#### B. Historical Context

The Corning family home stood on this site from 1854 to 1934. The estate demolished the home to develop the property. The estate built at least one other building, also known as the Corning Building, at the southwest corner of Main and Pratt Streets. The ground floor of this Corning Building was long occupied by Cooley & Co., stockbrokers. Graham Jones

and Charles P. Cooley, Jr., were principals in the firm. Cooley & Co. ceased to occupy the ground floor when it was absorbed by a large, national brokerage house, and moved out.

Since 1976 the building has been occupied by The Farley Company whose principals are also principals in 100 Pearl Street Associates. The Farley Company has temporarily vacated the premises but will move back to the new building to be constructed on the site as soon as it is completed.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The front elevation is a sophisticated statement of contemporary architecture in the Art Moderne mode. The central recessed section of polished black granite is flanked by pre-cast stone walls on a black granite base. These three sections of the elevation are unified by a partial parapet that rises in an intermediate plane. Three vertical lines of fenestration are carried out in satin-finish aluminum.
2. Condition of the fabric: Sound.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building plan is a rectangle, 48' in width and 77' deep. There are a basement and two stories with mezzanines at the front between the first and second floors. The basement has a garage accessed by a ramp down the east elevation. It is an early example of on-site parking for an office building.
2. Foundations: Reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: Brick sides and rear. Front pre-cast stone, granite, marble.
4. Structural systems, framing: Reinforced concrete. Floors and roof concrete.
5. Porches: None.
6. Chimneys: One steel chimney at northwest corner, attached to Shoor Brothers Building.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The glazed double front door is aluminum. An exit door at the rear is metal.

- b. Windows: There is a vertical section of glazing over the front door. It is divided into four tripartite tiers by aluminum muntins. The flanking sections of the front elevation have vertical fenestration providing windows for first floor, mezzanine and second floor, separated by aluminum spandrels. The windows consists of three vertical planes and operable awnings.

Windows in the side and rear elevations are double-hung steel sash, 3/3, the panes being elongated vertically like the panes in the front windows.

8. Roof:

- a. The flat roof is covered with tar and gravel.
- b. Cornice: None.
- c. Dormers, etc.: There are skylights in the roof.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The front door opens to a vestibule and a stairwell. Beyond the stairwell the first floor, originally a largely open space, is now divided into small offices. There is a mezzanine on either side of the stairwell at the front. The second floor, originally two spaces divided by a wall, is now divided into small offices. See sketch plans.
- 2. Stairways: The front stairway of stainless steel has curved corners. It winds around the stairwell in a series of dog legs. Treads are aggregate. The ceiling of the stairwell is composed of four recessed concentric squares. The various components of the stairwell contribute to a striking sense of unity for its design as a whole. The windows already described are an important contributing feature.

There is a steel switch-back stairway at the rear. Also, short runs left and right of the front stairwell to the mezzanines.

- 3. Flooring: Covered by tile and carpet.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are plaster, painted. Ceilings are dropped.
- 5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Existing doors and doorways are alterations, with metal bucks. See sketch plans for locations.

- b. Windows: There is no notable interior window trim. See sketch plans for locations of windows.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: None.
- 7. Hardware: The only original hardware is the window latches.
- 8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. HVAC: There are conventional cast-iron radiators under the windows. According to local tradition, the building was equipped with air conditioning when constructed, but the nature of the system is unknown.
  - b. Lighting: There are no original or interesting lighting fixtures.
  - c. Plumbing: See sketch plans.
- 9. Original furnishings: None.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The building faces south. To the west is the vacant parcel at the corner of Pearl and Trumbull Streets. The building to the east is separated from the Corning Building by the width of the ramp to the garage. To the north there is about six feet of space separating the Corning Building from the rear of the buildings facing Asylum Street, except at the western end of the north elevation where the Corning Building abuts the Shoor Brothers building for about six feet.
- 2. Historic landscape design: None.
- 3. Outbuildings: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: Attached as part of this report are reduced copies of available architectural drawings. The originals are housed in The Connecticut Historical Society archives listed as ACC. No. n.n. #37 34-20 Htfd-Conn. Tr. Corning Estate Pearl St Frontage.
- B. Historic Views: A thorough search of the State of Connecticut Library Hartford Collection, The Hartford Public Library Photo Collection, The Connecticut Historical Society and the Hartford Newspaper Photo Morgue have produced no historical photographs of this building or general area.

C. Interview: With Elizabeth J. MacKenzie (formerly Mrs. Lester B. Scheide) September 21, 1984, at her home on Brockway Ferry Road in Lyme, CT.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources.

Hartford Land Records as cited at A., 3.

Asylum-Trumbull-Pearl Streets Historic District, nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1984.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Kuckro, Anne Crofut, Hartford Architecture, Volume One: Downtown, (Hartford: Hartford Architecture Conservancy, 1978).

E. Likely sources not investigated: None known.

F. Supplemental material: None.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The structures from 60 through 100 Pearl Street are to be demolished to make way for a new office building. The owners and occupants of the new building, in large part, will be the owners and occupants of the present building. The Federal agency involved is the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, involved because one of the buildings to be demolished is the Mechanics Savings Bank Building, and the Mechanics Savings Bank will occupy space in the new structure.

Prepared by:

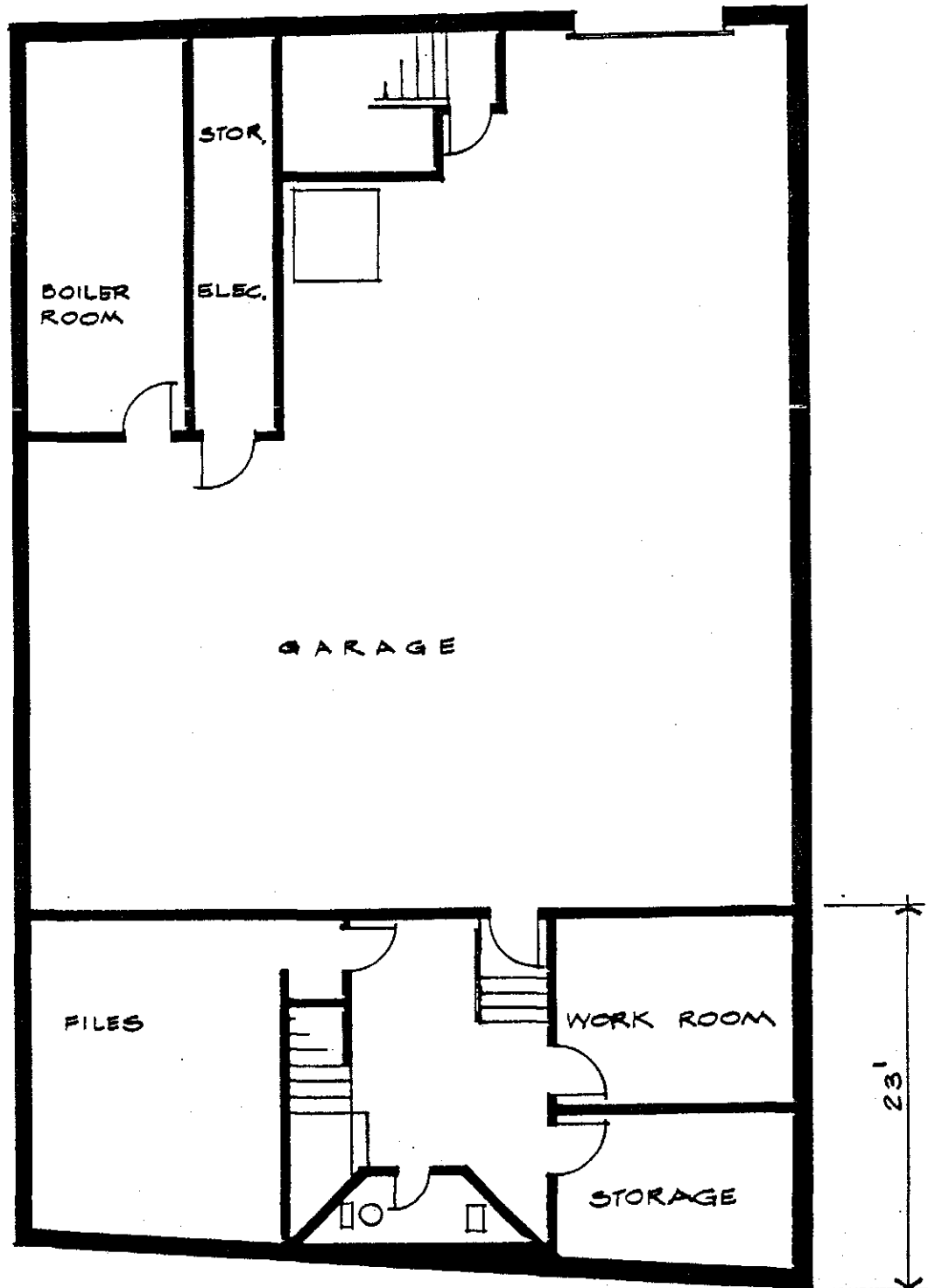
David F. Ransom  
January 27, 1985



# CORNING BUILDING

HABS No. CT-396 (Page 8)

## Basement Floor Plan

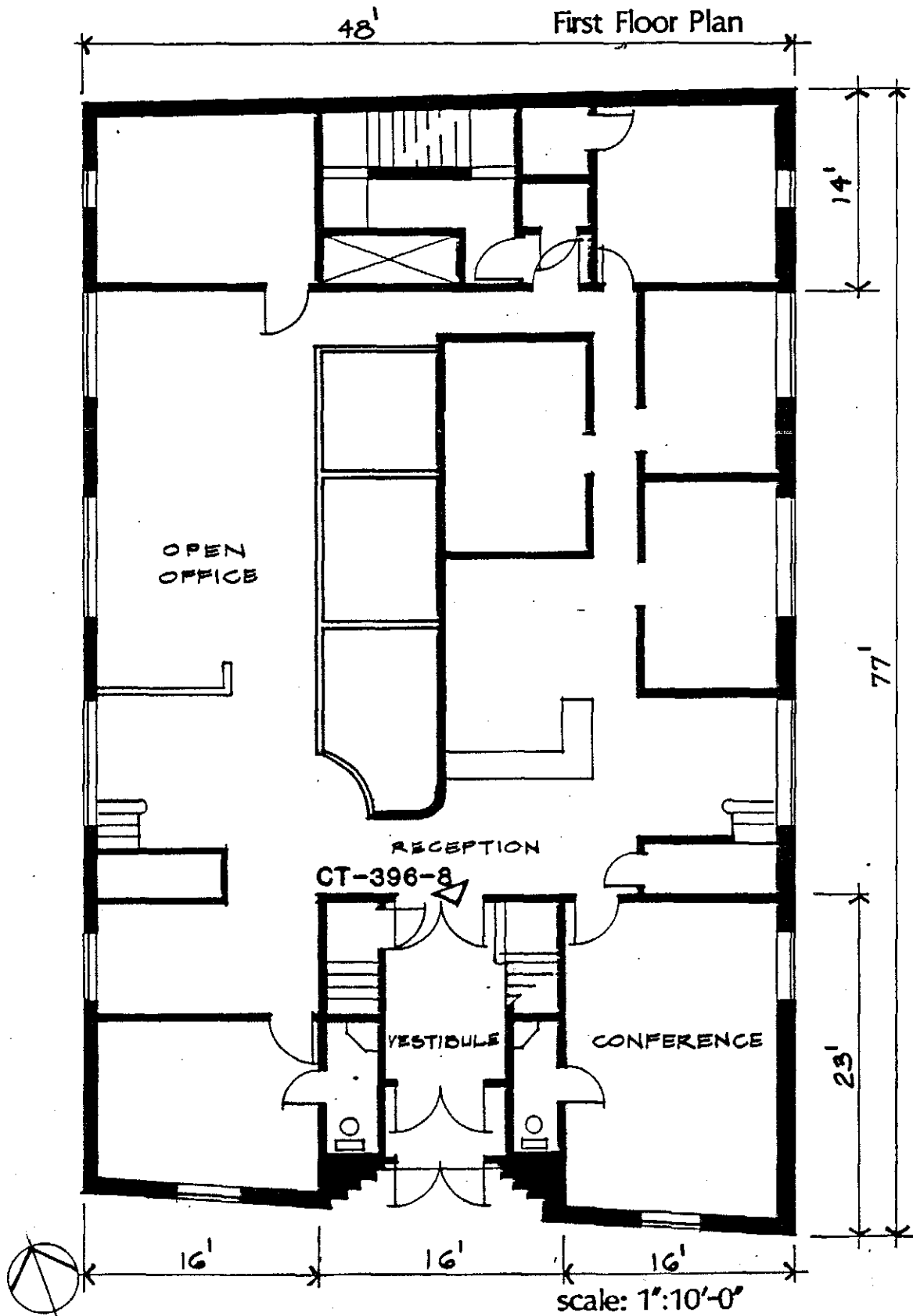


scale: 1":10'-0"

2/10/86

# CORNING BUILDING

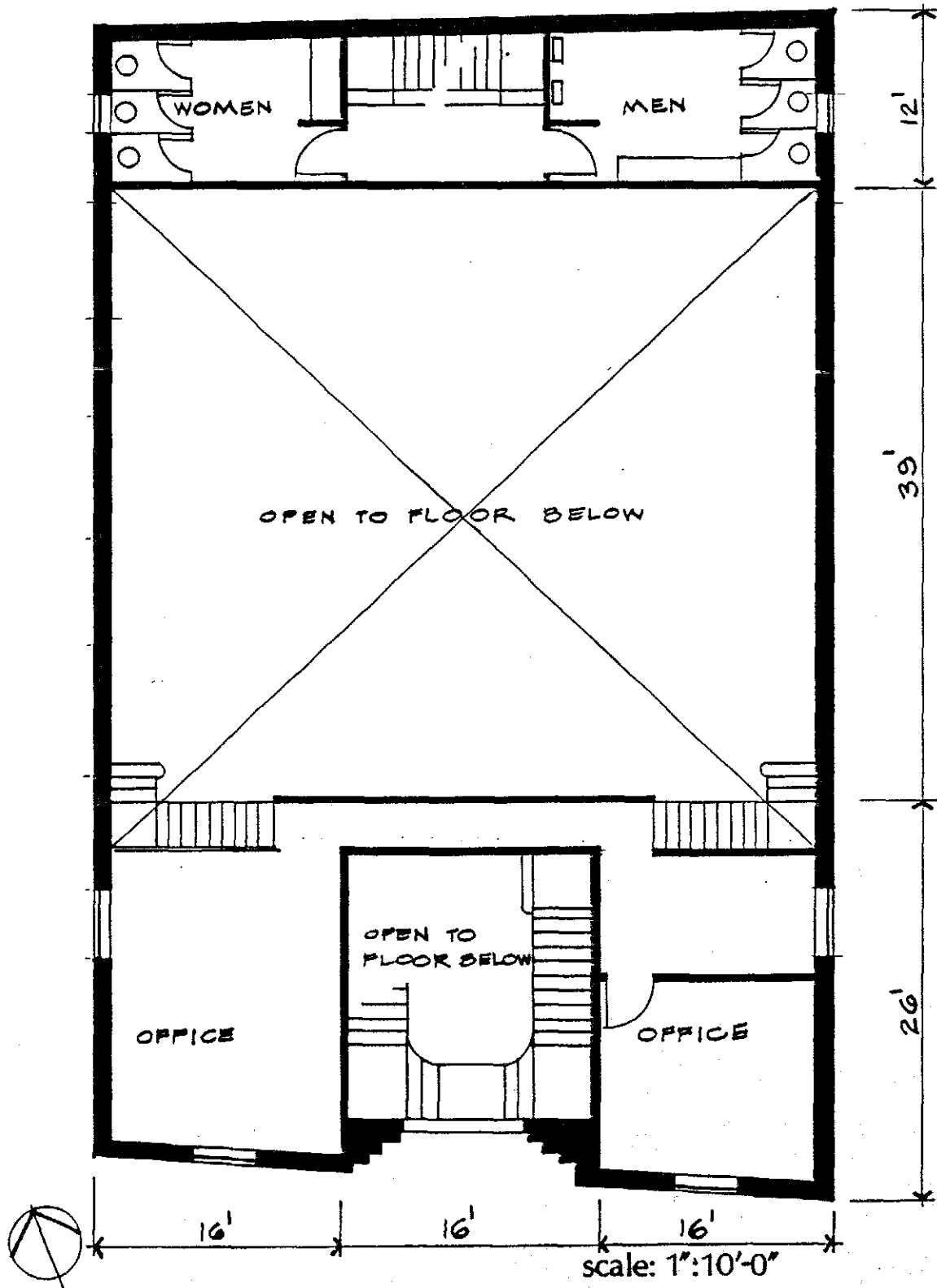
HABS No. CT-396 (Page 9)



# CORNING BUILDING

HABS No. CT-396 (Page 10)

## Second Floor Plan

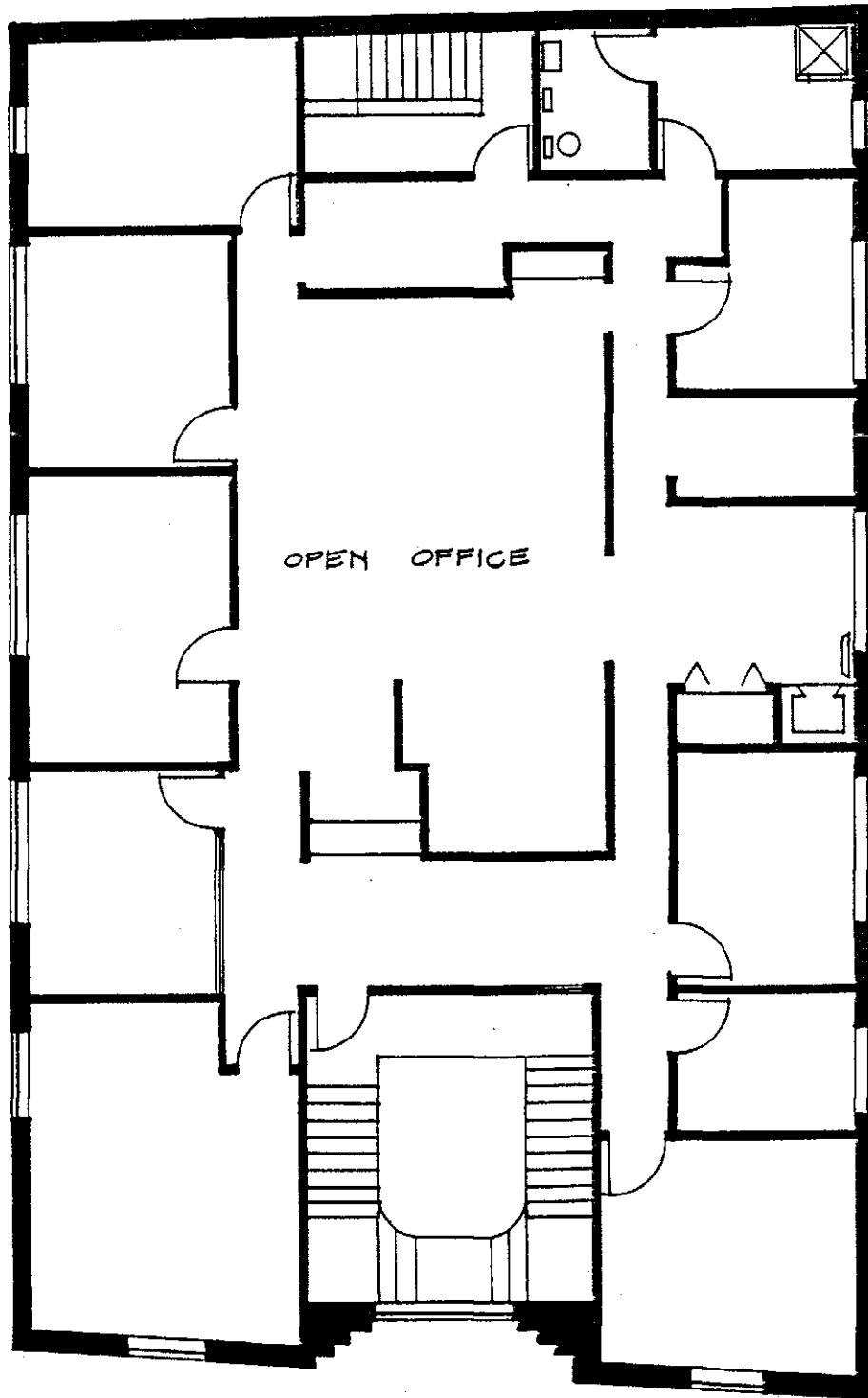


2/10/86

# CORNING BUILDING

HABS No. CT-396 (Page 11)

## Third Floor Plan

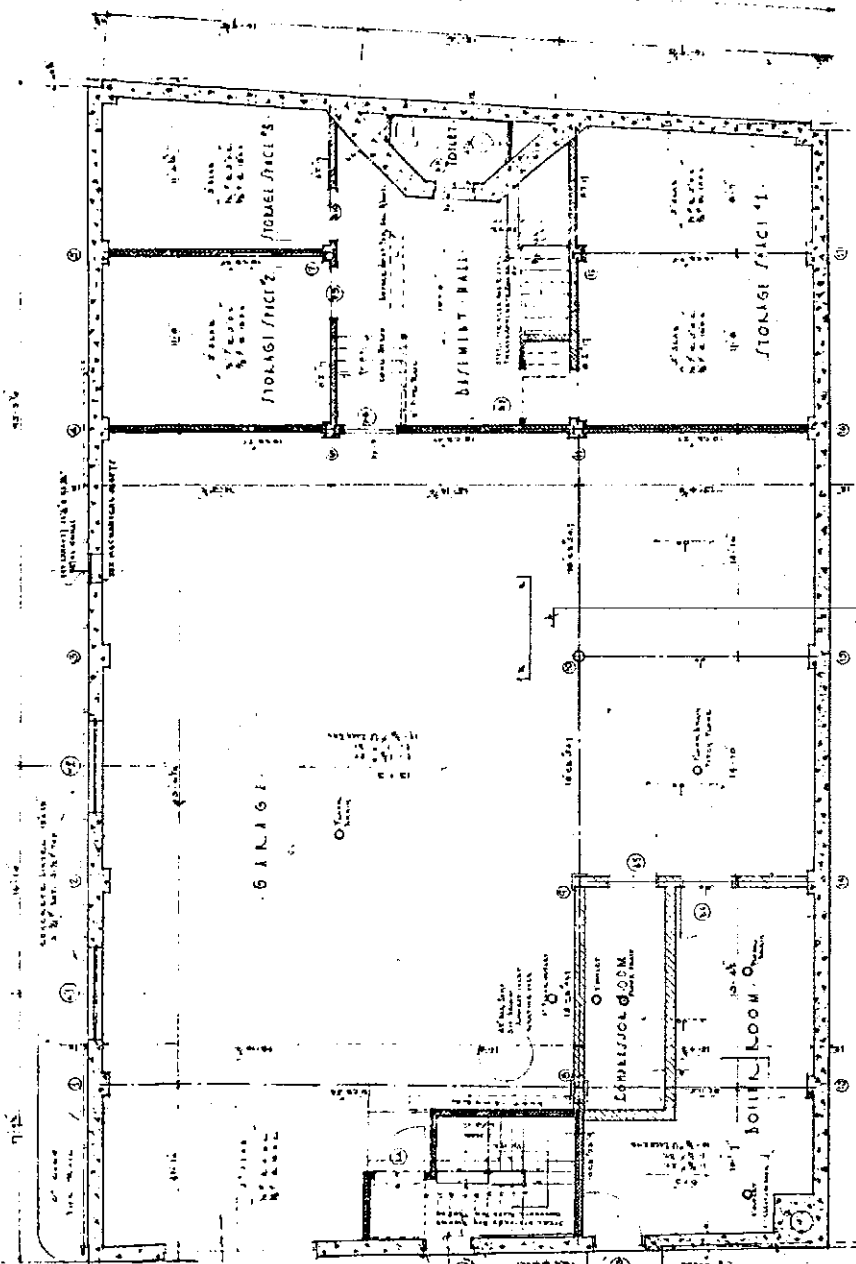


scale: 1":10'-0"

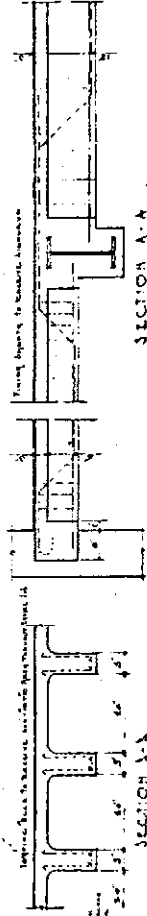
2/10/86

JOHN J. COLLINS ESTATE	
102 - PINE STREET	
HARTFORD, CONN.	
OWNER	JOHN J. COLLINS ESTATE
DESIGNED BY	LESTER BEACH SCHULME
CONTRACTED BY	80 PINE STREET
DATE	1912
SCALE	1/4" = 1'-0"
BASMENT FLOOR PLAN	
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"	

Corning Building  
HABS No. CT-396  
(Page 12)



BASMENT FLOOR PLAN



SECTION A-A

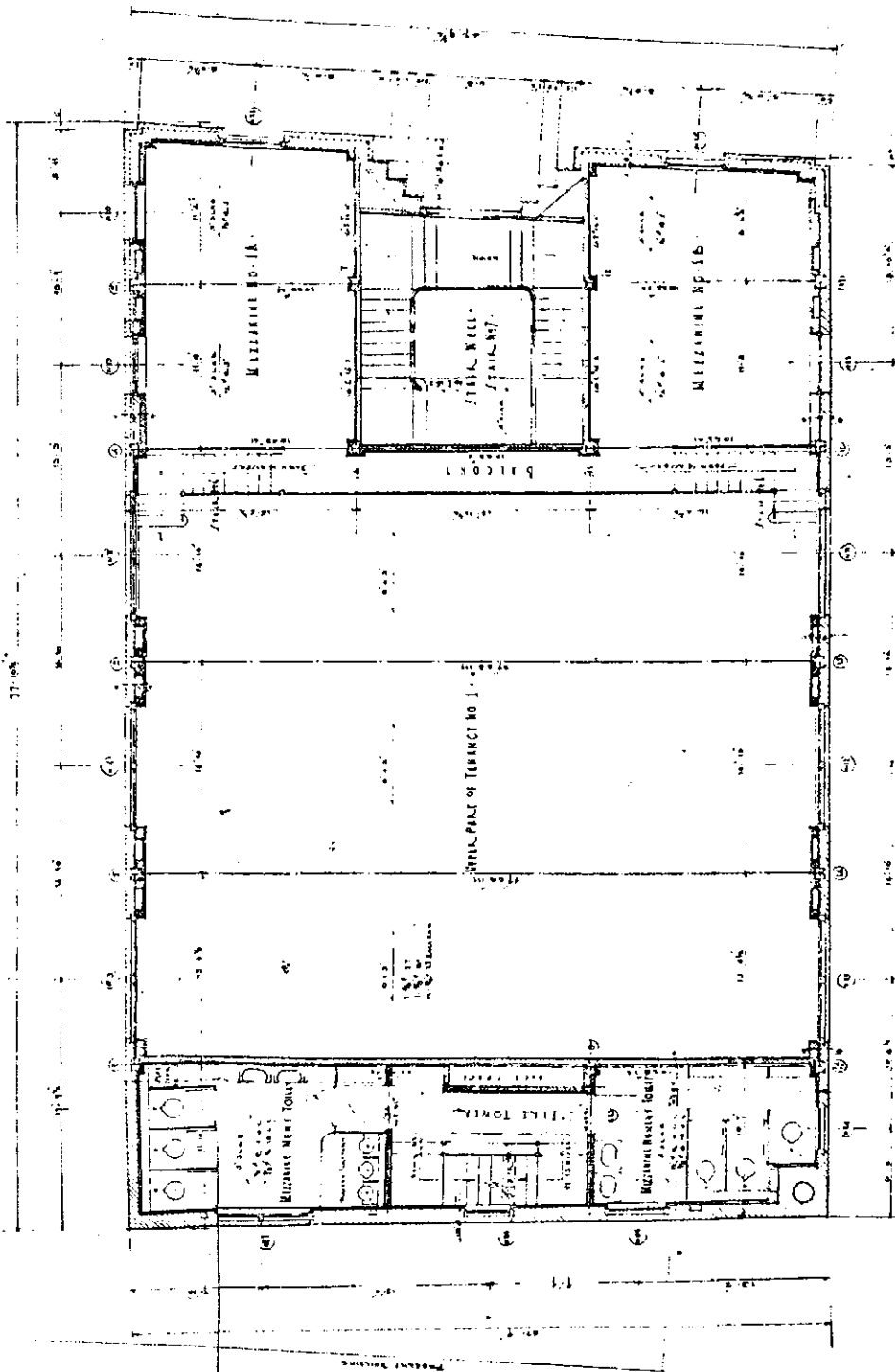
SECTION B-B



JOHN J. CORNING ESTIMATOR		102 PEARL STREET		HARTFORD, CONN.	
OWNER:		LESTER BEACH SCHUBERT		JOB NO.	
ARCHITECT:		80 PEARL STREET		DATE:	
ENGINEER:		HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT		DATE:	
DRAWN BY:		MICHAEL HODGKINS		CHECKED BY:	
DATE:		12/2/74		DATE:	

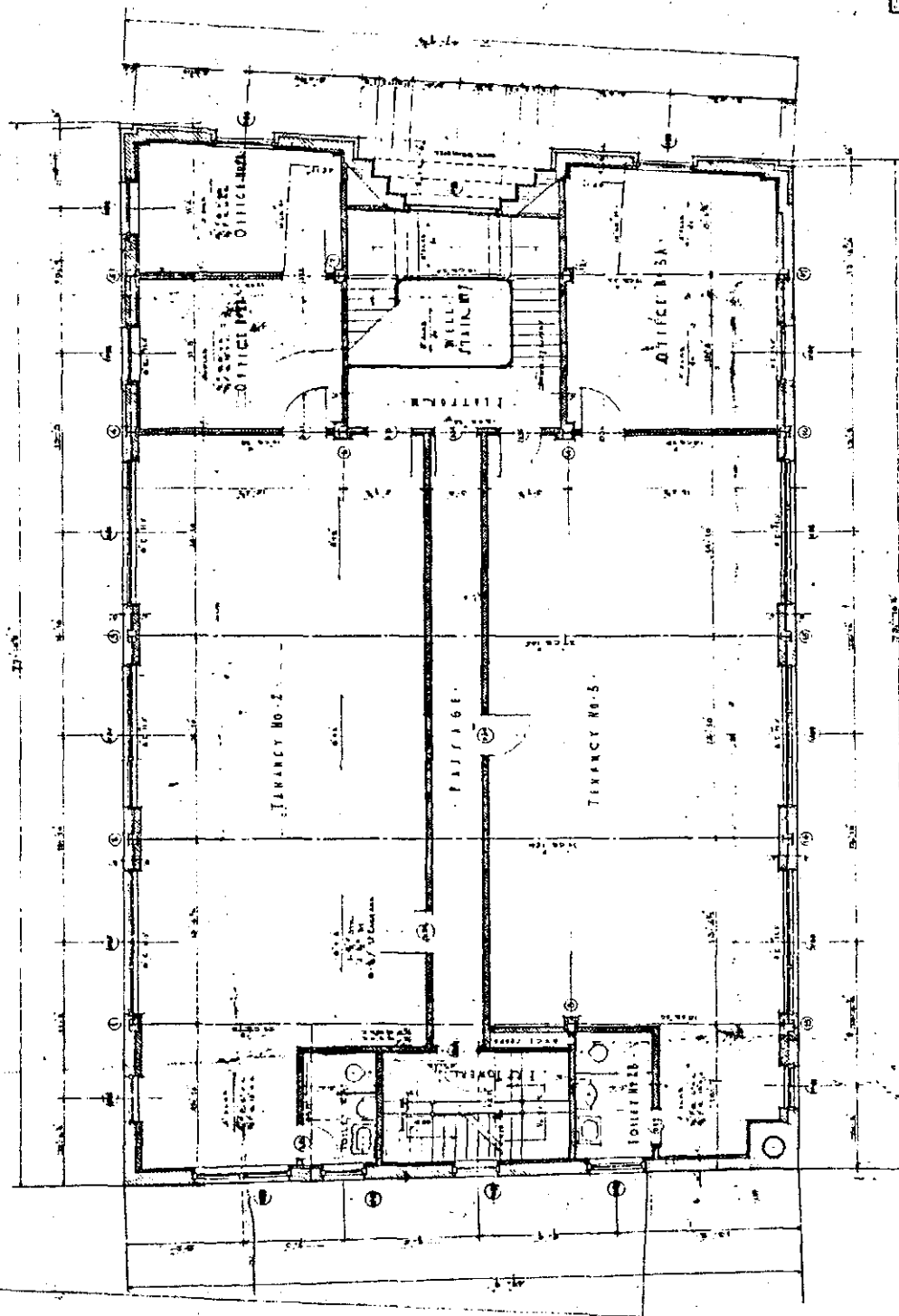
Corning Building  
HABS No. CT-396  
(Page 14)

MICHAEL HODGKINS FLOOR PLAN



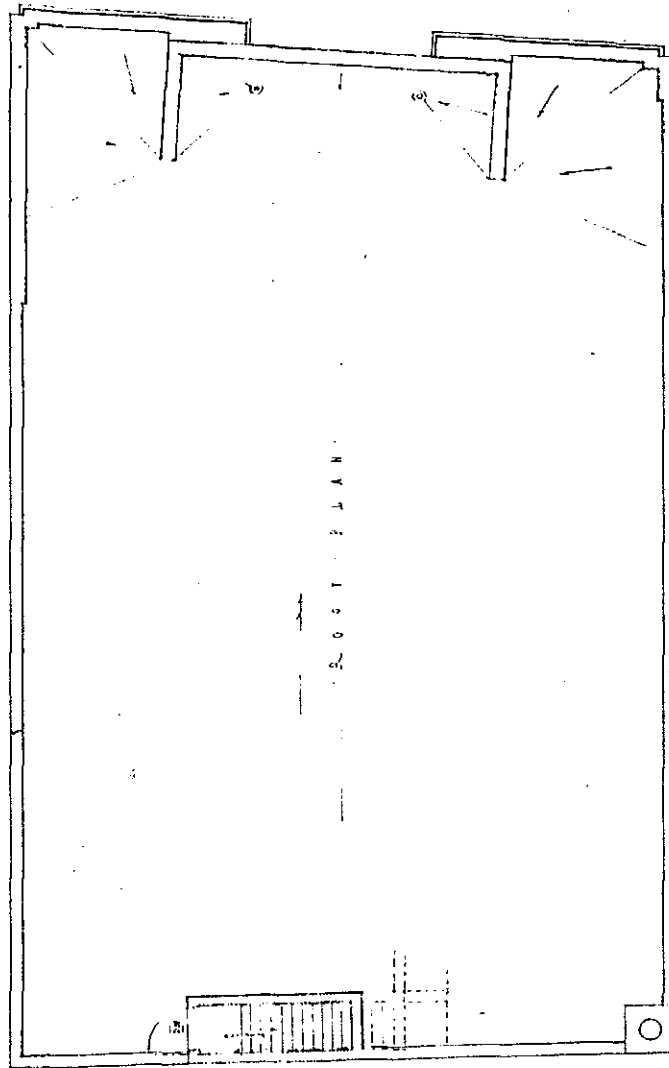
17-5-1-100

JOHN J. COLNINE ESTATE 102 PEARL STREET HARTFORD, CONN.	LESTER BEACH SCHULTE 140 P. LANCETTES 50 PEARL STREET HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT	54 10 5 2 0 20 1 10
---	---	------------------------------



SECOND FLOOR: PLAN

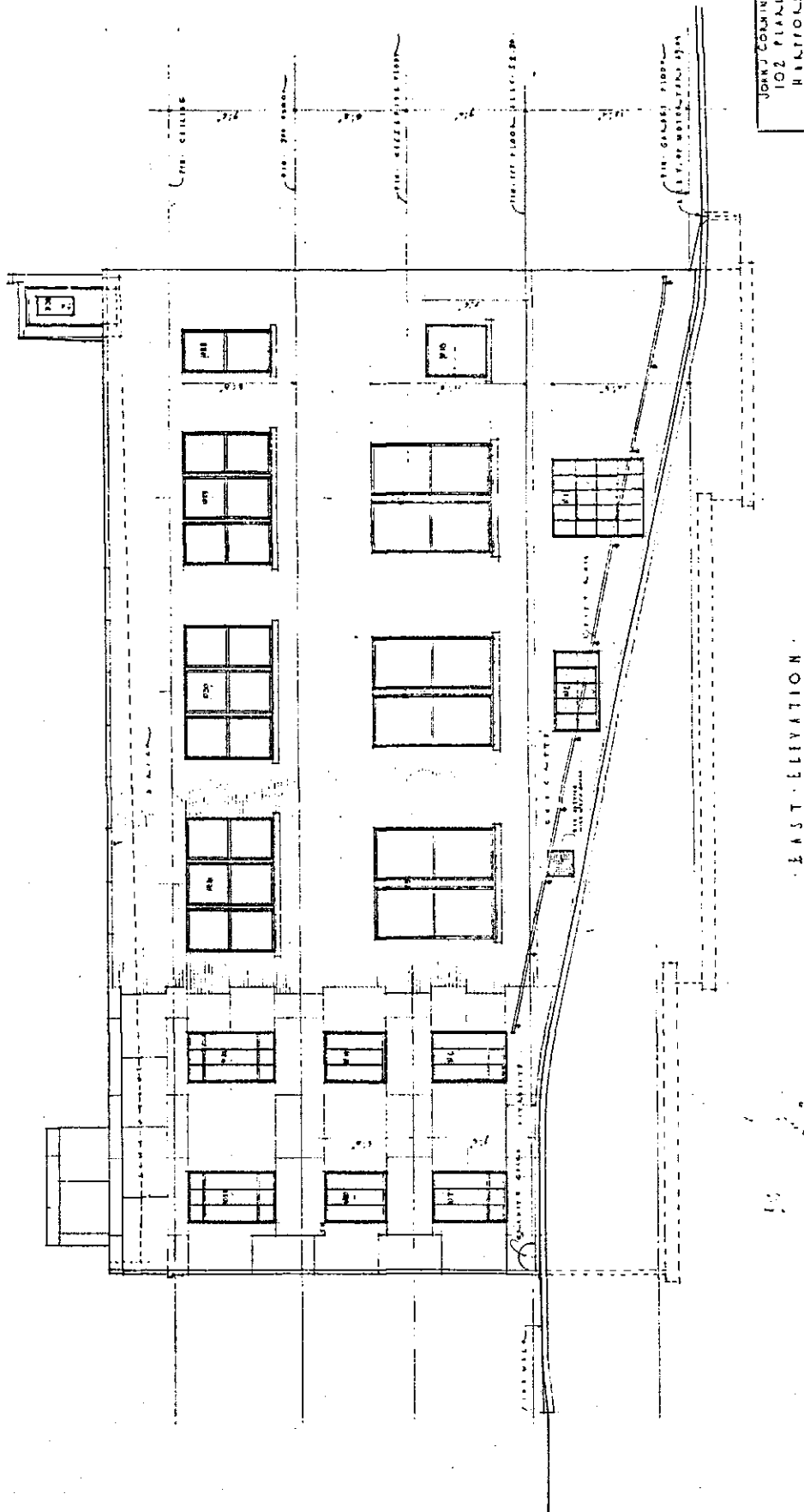


[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Notes on Martin, Josephine

1. Try 4 - Tucson on Yellow Hwy. 210
2. Time 2 - " " Jerome Avenue Hwy.
3. " " " "
4. Try 2 - Keweenaw Island (nearby), Assiniboia
5. Try 3 - Tucson International Airport (nearest)
6. Yellow Highway
7. " "
8. " "
9. " "
10. " "
11. " "
12. " "
13. " "
14. " "
15. " "
16. " "
17. " "
18. " "
19. " "
20. " "
21. " "
22. " "
23. " "
24. " "
25. " "
26. " "
27. " "
28. " "
29. " "
30. " "
31. " "
32. " "
33. " "
34. " "
35. " "
36. " "
37. " "
38. " "
39. " "
40. " "
41. " "
42. " "
43. " "
44. " "
45. " "
46. " "
47. " "
48. " "
49. " "
50. " "
51. " "
52. " "
53. " "
54. " "
55. " "
56. " "
57. " "
58. " "
59. " "
60. " "
61. " "
62. " "
63. " "
64. " "
65. " "
66. " "
67. " "
68. " "
69. " "
70. " "
71. " "
72. " "
73. " "
74. " "
75. " "
76. " "
77. " "
78. " "
79. " "
80. " "
81. " "
82. " "
83. " "
84. " "
85. " "
86. " "
87. " "
88. " "
89. " "
90. " "
91. " "
92. " "
93. " "
94. " "
95. " "
96. " "
97. " "
98. " "
99. " "
100. " "

[illegible]



JOHN CORNING UPHOLSTERY		102 PLAIN STREET		HARTFORD, CONN.	
LESTER BEACH SCHEINE		ARCHITECT		50 PLAIN STREET	
HARTFORD, CONN.		DATE		8/25/31	
EAST ELEVATION		SCALE		1/4" = 1'-0"	

Corning Building  
HABS No. CT-396  
(Page 17)

PLAN OF BUILDING

Architect's Office

STAIRCASE BUILDING

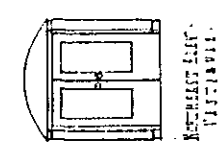
WEST ELEVATION

JOHN J. COLLINS & SONS		102 PRINCE STREET	
HARTFORD, CONN.		ARCHITECTS	
LISTER HAZEN KENNE		80 PRINCE STREET	
HARTFORD, CONN.		8/12/34	
WEST ELEVATION		7 CASE 14-1-0	

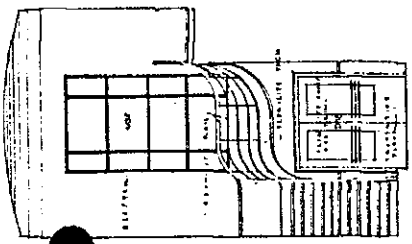
Corning Building  
HABS No. CT-396  
(Page 18)



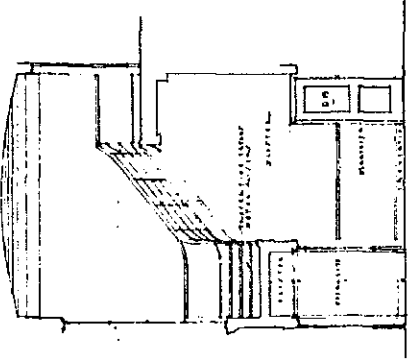
APPROVED MAY 21, 1931  
THE NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY



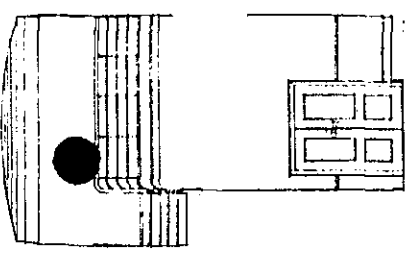
NORTHEAST VIEW



SOUTH-WEST ELEVATION

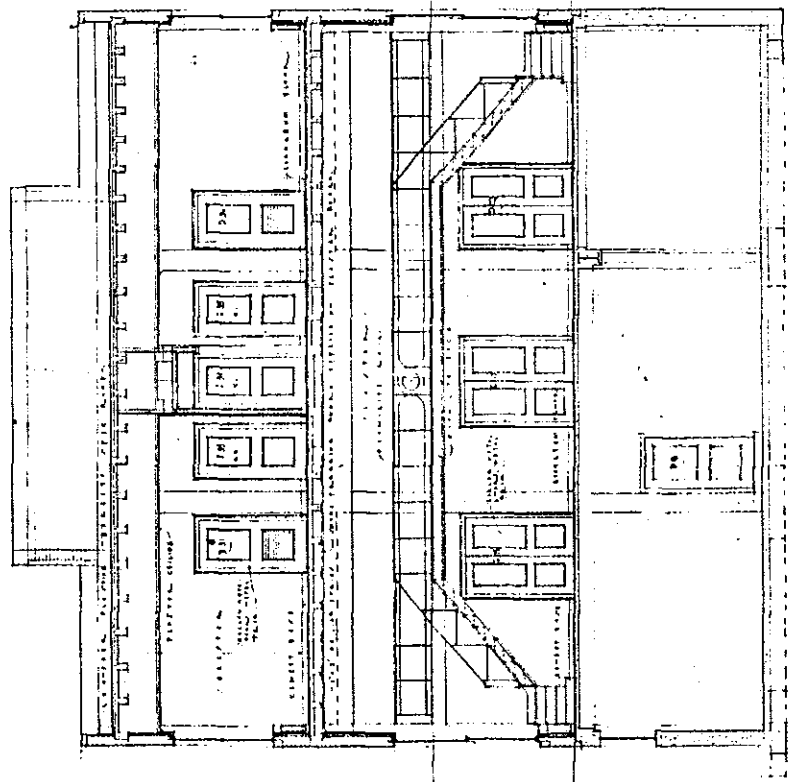


NORTH-WEST ELEVATION

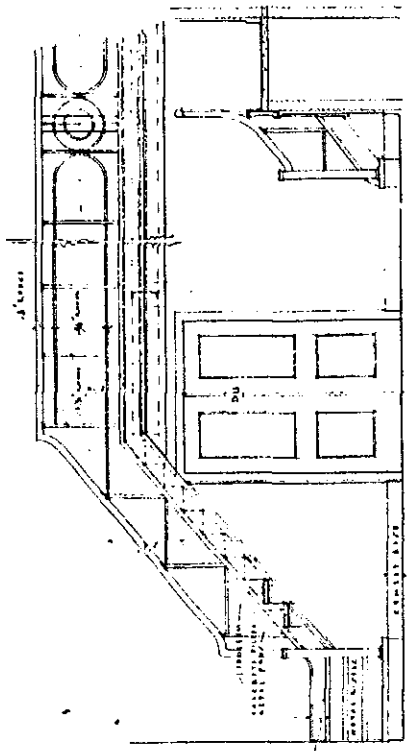


NORTHEAST ELEVATION

LOBBY

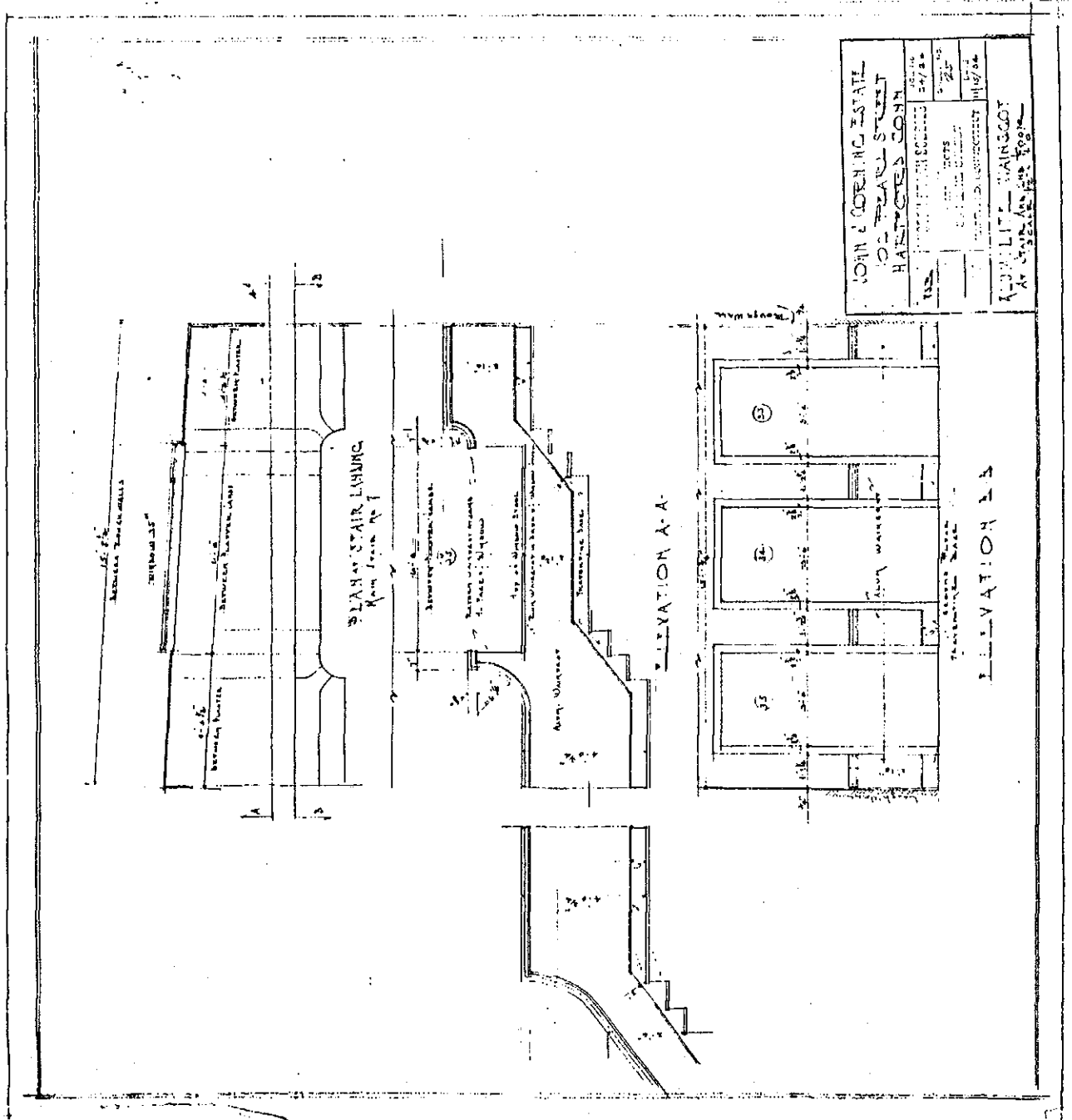


CROSS SECTION THROUGH BUILDING LOOKING SOUTH WEST



1/2" SCALE DETAILS OF STAIR TO MIZZANINE

JOHN J. CORNING DETAIL		102 PEARL ST.
HARTFORD, CONN.		
W. N.	WESTER BEACH SCULPTURE	24" x 36" x 12"
ILL.	ILLUSTRATION	24" x 36" x 12"
NO.	NO. PEARL STREET	102
DATE	HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT	5/21/31
CROSS SECTION, LOBBY, ELEVATION		SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



FLASHING

Corning Building  
HABS No. CT-396 (Page 22)

EX 3' X 3/8" L

HEAD

JAMB

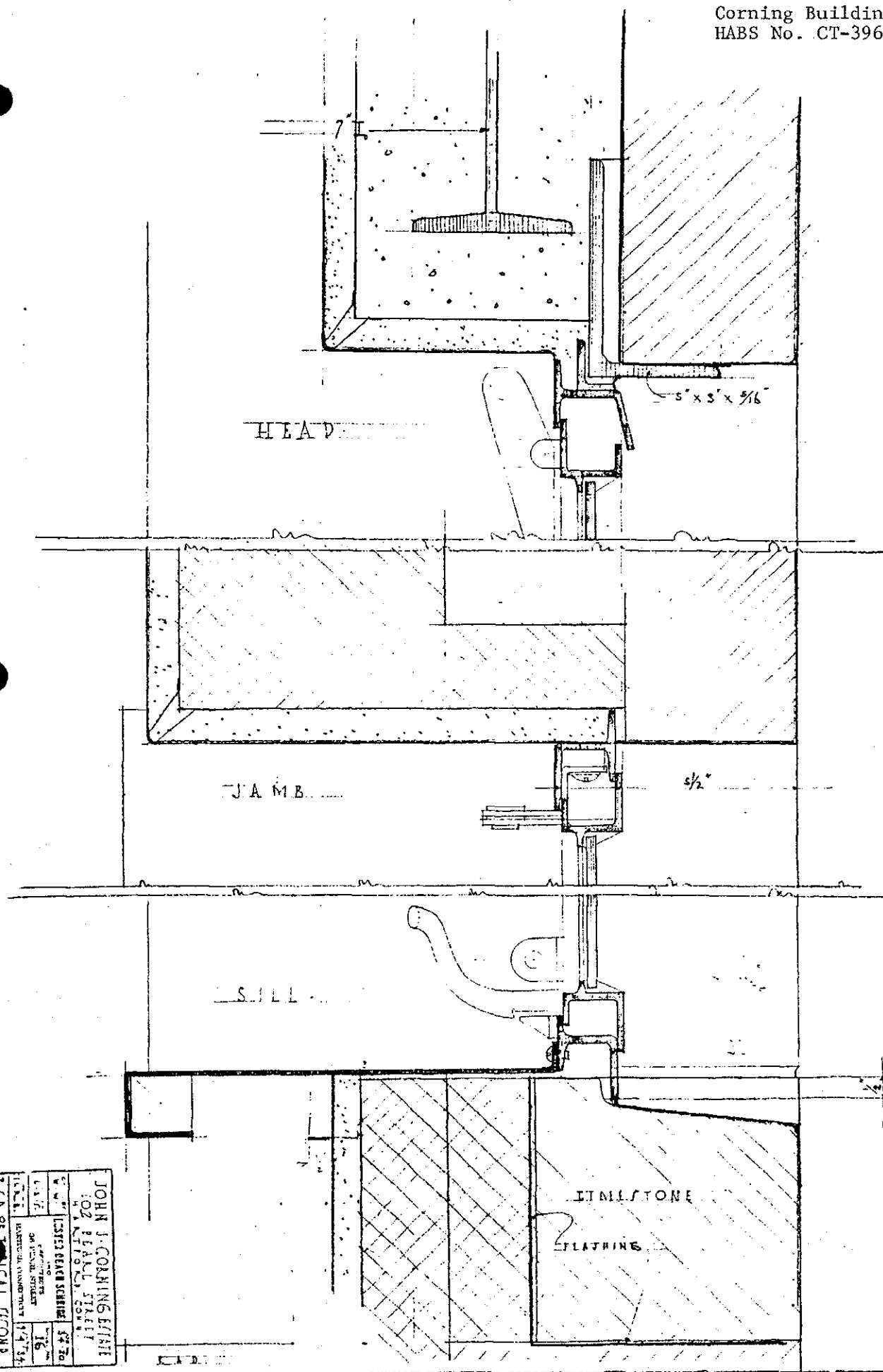
ILL

FLASHING

JOHN J CORNING, ESQ.  
102 TRAIL ST.  
HARTFORD, CT  
LISTER BELL SCHEM  
ARCHITECT  
30 TRAIL ST.  
HARTFORD, CT  
1/8/22

VITROLITE

Stops Sign - Post Office  
6-7-10-11-20-22-23-24-25

[illegible]



